

EARLIEST "FIRST LADY"

Betty Taylor Dandridge Still Living in Virginia.

MAY RETURN TO WASHINGTON

Daughter of President Zachary Taylor, Who, During Her Brief Tenure as Mistress of the White House, Made So Many Friends, Lives Quietly at Winchester, Va.—Newspapers of Her Day Did Not Pay Much Attention to Social Function.

It is a somewhat curious fact that although there are but two living ex-presidents, there are living five women who have been mistresses of the presidential house, as the Executive Mansion was called in the earlier days. Doubtless this does not argue that the wives of public men have greater longevity than their husbands, but that the mistresses of the White House have probably been much younger in years than the masters. This is not so truly the fact in regard to Mrs. Grant and Mrs. Garfield, but it is certainly so with Mrs. Cleveland, who is less than half the age of the ex-president, and in relation to the remaining two, one was the daughter of a President and the other a niece.

On account of her long and almost continuous residence in Washington, Mrs. Harriet Lane Johnson, who as Harriet Lane, the niece of the young hostess of the White House from March 4, 1809, to March 3, 1851, is well known to the public. Mrs. Johnson is yet a charming and vivacious woman, who has been mentioned periodically in the many Washington papers, her home being one of the most sought after in the city.

Four years, however, previous to the death of Miss Harriet Lane, Betty Taylor, daughter of Gen. Zachary Taylor, had the social responsibilities of the "first lady of the land" upon her on account of the ill-health of her mother. Betty Taylor, now Mrs. Landridge, resides at Winchester, in the beautiful valley of the Shenandoah, rarely coming to Washington, and when here has not gone into society at all. Her life has been so quiet that she has been supposed to have passed away, and numerous articles which have appeared in periodicals of late years in regard to ladies of the White House have spoken of her as having died many years ago, and in some cases as having died in childhood and ten years ago for no more than fifty.

Mrs. Dandridge came to the White House a bride having married Col. Bliss, who was a gallant officer of her father's staff during the Mexican War, but a short time previous to the election of Gen. Taylor to the Presidency. Her husband, the finest accomplishments and endeared herself to the Washington society of that time as few ladies of the White House have done in their regime. Had not her father's death, which occurred at Winchester, suddenly by death, Betty Taylor would doubtless have been celebrated in the tales of the old mansion with an affection hardly less than that bestowed so lavishly upon Dolly Madison. Even with her present weight of years she is a very handsome woman, with all the grace of the Southern belle of other days. Not a wrinkle has crossed her forehead, and her complexion, her voice is clear and musical, and at the least shadow of a smile a bewitching dimple chases in and out of her cheek, while her eyes have the appearance and to the charm of her conversation and presence.

Widowed and Orphaned.

The death of her husband, Col. Bliss, followed hard upon that of her father, and rarely, indeed, in the life of a lady of the White House has so great a change come within so little time. On the 24th of July, 1850, President Taylor was taken ill. On the night of the following Tuesday he died, after having had but a little more than a year of the Presidency. On the 25th of July, 1850, Betty Taylor took the oath and assumed the duties of President, and on Saturday the bereaved family left the White House forever. The death of Col. Bliss soon followed, and the brilliant young mistress of the mansion was both widowed and orphaned. Years after, and just previous to the civil war, Mrs. Bliss married Mr. Dandridge, a member of one of the famous old families of Virginia, who in turn passed away a dozen years ago.

FORERUNNER OF REUNION.

First Confederate to Aid in Decorating Union Graves.

Gen. Joseph Wheeler's visit to Boston, taken part in the exercises of Memorial Day, drew attention to the fact that he was well remembered in Washington as a brilliant and witty conversationalist and inimitable raconteur. His estate in Louisiana, which he inherited from his father, was confiscated during the war, and he was restored to him in an awfully ruined condition, because he was his father's son. Nearly all of the relics of the Mexican War which came into the possession of Gen. Taylor were left to him by the donation of the mansion house in Louisiana, and Mrs. Dandridge possesses but a few, which were given her by her mother. Among these are a pair of white epaulettes worn by her father, and a Mexican War, and a sash which was very tragic history, it being the one worn by Braddock on the fatal field where he was killed and which was carried from the spot. It was woven by a French dock by British friends, and not only bears his initials inwoven, but also drops of the blood of the reckless warrior. In this long, broad, and beautiful sash of the loom of Washington and Capt. Stuart of the Virginia Guards, carried Braddock from the fatal field. The sash remained in the possession of a Virginia lady for long years, and was the branch of this family to New Orleans. The owner, full of enthusiasm for the Mexican hero, had the sash presented to Taylor after the final victories at the great hero of the land. Although this is but fifty years gone, one is not compelled to take more than a passing glance at the public prints to discover that the "society reformer" was not born in that period. Evidently it was thought in bad taste to mention the name of a lady in the newspapers, even though her position and functions were semi-official.

Brief Newspaper Notices.

The National Intelligencer was a famous paper of the day, doubtless the superior in this city from Harper's last issue. It was thought in bad taste to mention the name of a lady in the newspapers, even though her position and functions were semi-official.

The proprietors of Willard's Hotel inform us that the President-elect has engaged rooms of them, and that he will probably arrive in Washington on Friday of the present week.

"Mrs. Taylor, the lady of the President-elect," says another editorial note upon the 25th, "accompanied by Col. Bliss and family, arrived in this city from Harper's last issue, and are occupying apartments at Willard's Hotel, where they expect to be joined this evening by President Taylor, who reached Cumberland about 7 o'clock last night, and will depart thence this morning."

A brief paragraph on the 26th was devoted to the arrival of the President, and the arrival of the Vice President was announced in a sentence, the editor adding that it "gives us pleasure to learn that he is in his usual good health." The barest mention of the coming and going of President Taylor is made during the days intervening before the inauguration. On March 2 the bare skeleton of the programme of the inauguration was published, signed by Secretary Johnson, Jefferson

WHERE MISERY MAKES MERRY.

Quaint Italian Music Hall in the Heart of the New York Theatre Mirror.

FOUNDED CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Famous Laetare Medal for Emulous Services in the Cause of Religion, Education, and Morals Bestowed Upon the Marquise de Meriville, who built the First Catholic University Hall—Third Woman to Whom Medal Was Awarded.

Notre Dame, Ind., May 26.—One woman of all the women in America has been selected by the faculty of the University of Notre Dame to be the recipient of the year 1898 of the famous Laetare medal, which each year is presented to whoever, in the estimation of the faculty, has most distinguished him or herself in the realm of religion, education, and morals. The woman who has been thus honored is Mary Gwendolyn Caldwell, the chief founder of the Catholic University of America. This is only the third time that the medal has been presented to a woman.

The medal itself is a simple and beautiful emblem. From a broad golden band which bears the words "Laetare Medal," in purple enamel, depends a massive disk of finest gold, with raised edges and sunken center. It is a bit of art work which any goldsmith might be proud to claim as his creation. Though in general the design never changes, each medal is unique, because the artist each year strives to epitomize the career of the woman to whom it is awarded. This year's medal is a masterpiece of artistry, and "Magna Mater" in purple enamel, while the central field is taken up by a relief of Caldwell Hall, Washington, the building founded by Mrs. Caldwell. The reverse of the disk is much the same.

Sketch of the Winner.

The woman to whom the 1898 medal is to be presented is now the Marquise de Meriville. She is a daughter of William Shakespeare Caldwell, who lived in France, and was a member of the French nobility. Her father was admitted into the church he founded a hospital for the Sisters of Charity, and a home for the aged under the charge of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

Mrs. Caldwell attained her majority in 1856, seven years after the death of her father. When she had assumed control of her fortune she went to Europe and became interested in university work. About this time she heard of the proposed Catholic University and she at once offered her services to the cause of the undertaking. In 1888 the first cornerstone of the university building was laid. This building is called Caldwell Hall, in honor of the benefactor.

On the laying of the cornerstone in 1888 Mrs. Caldwell received a gold medal from the Pope. This is a magnificent example of metal work. The face of the medal bears the profile of St. Ignace, and on the reverse is represented the figure of history borne aloft by angels. The medal symbolizes the advance of learning and was deemed most appropriate for a woman like Mrs. Caldwell, who devoted her life to the cause of education in America. The medal was accompanied by a letter from the Pope in which he said:

"In order that to the praise deserved by her beneficence should be added some pledge of our appreciation, we entrusted to you a gold medal to be conveyed in our name to this excellent lady; but now we raise our voice to you, and we desire that by this our letter her munificence may be made better known and our gratitude more manifest."

Winners of the Medal.

Since its foundation in 1863 by the University of Notre Dame the Laetare Medal has been conferred upon a number of men and women of eminence. The first woman to whom the medal was conferred was Mrs. Eliza Allen, who was the first woman to receive the honor. She was a devoted worker in the cause of education and was the first woman to be elected to the office of trustee of the university. She was also the first woman to be elected to the office of regent of the university.

On whom the medal was conferred in 1887 is not a matter of public history. The medal selected for the year 1887 was a gold medal, and the recipient was Mrs. Eliza Allen, who was the first woman to receive the honor.

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SOUTHERN WOMEN IN GOTHAM.

Leaders of the Smart Set Who Hail from Dixie Land.

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CLIPPING RATES

The Weekly Post, Gentleman (N. Y.), Farm and Home, Handy Atlas of the World.

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